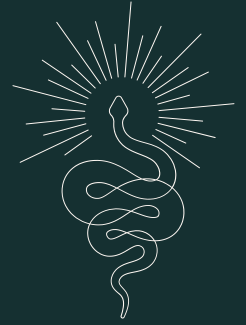


# Perineal Mobilization

Cultivate Pelvic Health and Physical Therapy

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## What is the perineum?

The perineum refers to the area between the vagina and the anus, which is made up of a band of skin, muscle, and connective tissue.

## Why perform perineal mobilization?

Perineal mobilization can be helpful for many individuals, including people who are pregnant and preparing for birth, people who may have experienced perineal tearing or have restricted scars, or people who have tension in the first layer of the pelvic floor muscles resulting in hypersensitivity and tissue mobility restrictions.

## General principles of perineal mobilization

- Provide gentle stretching and relaxation of the perineal tissues including skin, fascia, muscles, and scar tissue (if present).
- Perineal mobilization should never be painful, although a unique “burny” type of stretch may be felt.
  - I often describe this stretch as similar to if you were to open your mouth wide and then stretch the side of the lips/cheek out to the side.
  - Keep sensation to a level 4/10 or below, you should be able to breathe easily and keep all of your muscles relaxed in the pelvic floor and around the pelvis.
- Depending on guidance from your physical therapist, perineal mobilization may be performed anywhere from 1-5 minutes per session 3-7 days per week.
- For pregnant individuals, perineal mobilization can begin at **35 weeks** but make sure you are cleared by your physician before starting!

## Steps

1. Find a comfortable position for your body. Generally, reclined on a bolster or pillows with knees supported out on pillows is a good place to start. The vulvar skin should be exposed so that you are able to provide direct touch and mobilization.
2. Complete a body scan, looking for any holding of tension in the inner thighs, buttocks, abdomen, shoulders, and jaw. Take 5-10 diaphragmatic breaths, imagining you are breathing down into your perineum or pelvic bowl.
3. Place a small amount of lubricant (see my lube guide for recommendations!) at the vaginal opening to promote ease of movement.
4. Place a thumb, finger, wand, or other pelvic PT-approved mobilization tool at the vaginal opening. Repeat your deep breathing and/or 3-5 contract/relax cycles of the pelvic floor muscles if

- recommended by your PT to get a sense of where the tool is and to check in with your pelvic floor.
5. Start with “clock stretches,” applying very gradual pressure until you start to feel a change in sensation. If you want to explore more sensation, that is OK, but keep it 4/10 level or below and add pressure slowly while breathing.
    - a. 10-60 seconds stretch at 6:00, 4:00, 3:00, 8:00, 9:00
    - b. Repeat 2-3x
    - c. **Incorporate mindfulness** during your stretches: while you are exploring sensation, keep an open and beginner’s mindset. Be curious and welcoming of your body’s sensations, and try not to compare this session to past sessions. This is an opportunity to be with your body in this very moment.
      - i. Strategies to stay in the moment include naming sensation without judgement, verbalizing or imagining a mantra, using a breath count that feels comfortable, and body scanning.
  6. Then, progress to sweeping mobilizations. You will maintain the same gentle pressure or stretch onto the tissues as you move your pressure between two points on the clock. If you are doing this on yourself, you may need to switch hands when you switch sides.
    - a. 5-10 x from 4:00 - 6:00
    - b. 5-10 x from 8:00 - 6:00

## Visual Guide



This guide is an excellent way to get started on perineal mobilization, but an individualized assessment and treatment plan with a pelvic physical therapist and physician clearance is always recommended.

**Cheers to your happy perineum!**

Made with Gratitude, by Danielle.

[www.cultivatepelvichealthpt.com](http://www.cultivatepelvichealthpt.com)

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